

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

WOMEN IN COMBAT: A CULTURE ISSUE?

by

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ABSTRACT

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The Army has expanded the number of military occupational specialties (MOS) that women are allowed to fill. Some of these MOSs place women closer and closer to combat. Despite the fact that women are serving magnificently alongside their male counterparts in Iraq and are confronting the same degree of danger, there is only limited support to allow women to serve in combat. Our current President, as well as previous Presidents Clinton and Bush, oppose assigning women to combat. President H. W. Bush also recommended that females continue to be excluded from combat roles, including assignments on board combat ships. The Clinton Administration, however approved a new policy to allow Army women to serve with some ground combat units during fighting. Such disparity between presidents proffers the notion that a cultural issue might be at the core of the issue as women may not be physically fit to handle the stress and the psychological emotions of combat. Is this a societal issue that reflects the American peoples' unwillingness to accept women being killed in large numbers and possibly being subjected to horrifying treatment as prisoners of war? This paper will examine the role of women in combat from an Army prospective.

WOMEN IN COMBAT: A CULTURE ISSUE?

Over the years, the Army has expanded the number of Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) that women are allowed to fill. Some of these MOSs place women closer and closer to combat. Despite the fact that women are serving magnificently alongside their male counterparts in Iraq and are confronting the same degree of danger in many cases, there is still only limited support to allow women to serve in combat duty. According to a 1993 survey conducted by the Roper Organization at the request of the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, only 45% of the American public at the time would have supported a policy to allow women to *volunteer* for combat duty.¹ Our current President, as well as previous Presidents Clinton and Bush, have also generally opposed assigning women to combat roles, and earlier this year, on the issue of women in combat, President George W. Bush stated, "There's no change of policy as far as I'm concerned. No women in combat."² Former President Bush has also recommended that females continue to be excluded from combat roles, including assignments onboard combat ships.

The Clinton Administration, however, did at one time approve a policy to allow Army women to serve with some ground combat units during fighting. And President Bush, in his speech earlier this year, also said, "We've got to make sure we define combat properly. We've got women flying choppers and women flying fighters, which I'm perfectly content with."³ Such disparity between presidents leads one to ask if this is a cultural issue that dictates leaving the fighting to the men because women are not physically fit to handle the stress and the psychological emotions of combat. Further, is this a societal issue that's reflecting the American people's unwillingness to accept women being killed in large numbers and possibly being subjected to horrifying treatment as prisoners of war? Given that fighting in Iraq has no front line and that current recruiting is well below target, is it realistic to continue to exclude women from combat? This paper will, from an Army perspective, discuss the history of women in the American armed services, examine the current role of women in combat, and make recommendations to fully integrate women into the Army.

Definitions

Direct ground combat is conducted by "engaging an enemy on the ground with individual or crew served weapons."⁴ In direct ground combat, soldiers are routinely exposed to hostile fire, to a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy, and a substantial risk of capture.

Units collocated with direct ground combat units are “located within or in proximity to direct ground combat units.”⁶ “Collocated units are exposed to a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy and a substantial risk of capture.”⁶

American Women in Combat: A Historical Background

Throughout the history of our country, American women have played an integral role in supporting our nation’s war efforts at home. By caring for the wounded, housing troops in their own homes, and even serving as spies, women in America have sacrificed greatly to support our armed services.

In 1948, The Women’s Armed Services Integration Act gave women permanent status in the United States military, but even then, women were prohibited “from serving on Navy ships and aircraft engaged in combat missions as well as combat positions in the Marine Corps. (The Women’s Army Corps had already excluded women from combat positions, eliminating the need for a separate statute for Army servicewomen).”⁷

In 1950 through the 60’s, the ceiling on the number of women allowed to service in the military was lifted. The caps on women officer promotions above pay grade 0-3 were removed. Women became eligible for Flag/General Officer rank. Air Force Reserve Officer Training was open to women.

In the 1970’s, the Women Army Corps was integrated into the Army branches, Army Reserve Officer Training was open to women, women were admitted to Airborne and Air Assault School, the service Academies, to Field Artillery and Air Defense branches and women were allowed to fly noncombat aircrafts. “Finally, in 1978, Congress amended the 1948 Women’s Armed Services Integration Act to allow women to serve on additional types of non-combat ships.”⁸ Then, in 1988, the Department of Defense “set a single standard for evaluating positions and units from which the military service could exclude women.”⁹ The rule, called the “Risk Rule,” excluded women from “non-combat units or missions if the risks of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture were equal to or greater than the risk in the combat units they supported.”¹⁰

In 1992 and 1993, The National Defense Act “repealed the prohibition on the assignment of women to combat aircraft in the Air Force, the Navy, and the Marines Corps.”¹¹ In 1992, the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces report recommended “retaining the direct ground combat exclusion for women.”¹² In April 1993, the Secretary of Defense directed the services to “open more specialties and assignments to women, including those in combat aircraft and on as many noncombatant ships as possible

under current law.¹¹³ In 1994, the Secretary of Defense, in response to advice from the Implementation Committee, rescinded the Risk Rule in favor of a new policy which stated: "Service members are eligible to be assigned to all positions for which they are qualified, except that women shall be excluded from assignments to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct combat on the ground or units that are collocated with a direct ground combat unit. The rule listed four exceptions:

- Costs of appropriate berthing and privacy arrangements are prohibitive;
- Units or positions are doctrinally required to physically collocate and remain with direct ground combat units;
- Units are engaged in long-range reconnaissance operations or Special Operations Forces missions;
- Job related physical requirements would necessarily exclude a vast majority of women service members.¹¹⁴

As a result of these exclusions, "About 142,000 positions, or about 29 percent, of the Army's fiscal year 1998 active force authorized personnel end strength of 495,000 were closed to women.¹¹⁵ About half of these closures preclude assigning women to units involved in direct ground combat. "Women are effectively excluded from the occupational fields of Infantry, Armor, and Special Forces. The remaining closures are in occupational specialties or units that are required to collocate and remain with direct ground combat units, including Combat Engineering, Field Artillery, and Air Defense Artillery. Also, some occupational specialties in the petroleum and water, maintenance, and transportation career fields, for example, are considered open to women but are closed at certain unit levels because these units collocate with direct ground combat units.¹¹⁶

Some reasons for continuing the ground combat exclusion policy were presented in a 1994 DOD news briefing announcing the "opening of 80,000 new positions to servicewomen."¹¹⁷ "At the briefing, defense officials said they believed that "integrating women into ground combat units would not contribute to the readiness and effectiveness of those units because of the rigors of direct ground combat and the way individuals need to perform under those conditions."¹¹⁸ The DOD official providing the briefing, explained, "physical strength and stamina, living conditions, and lack of public support for women in ground combat were some of the issues considered."¹¹⁹ According to DOD, "its perception of the lack of public support was based partly on the results of a 1992 survey conducted under a presidential direction."²⁰

In May 2005, Congressional Republicans led by Representative Duncan Hunter, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, "won passage of an amendment to last year's

defense-spending bill that requires the Pentagon to issue a report this year showing that the military is following congressional restrictions on women in combat.²¹ The controversial bill, which closed “the Army’s Forward Support units to females,”²² could have been forced to withdraw or reassign thousands of women currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan had the House not abandoned the issue. These are the same women who have served and continue to serve courageously and valiantly alongside their male soldier counterparts, regardless of the fighting position. In these times of continuous military operations and continuing change (Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Global War on Terrorism, peacekeeping operations, transformation, and digitalization), Congress and Army leaders should take an honest and decisive look at something that touches the armed forces to the core: the issue of integrating females into combat. Women are an integral part of the total Army; however, policy still prohibits women from fully serving in combat and being assigned to combat specialties and branches. What are the bases for this exclusion? Would women in combat diminish the effective of the unit? Would readiness, cohesion and morale also diminish? Is it the physical differences between the genders? Is it the perceived role of women in American culture?

Women in the Armed Forces of Foreign Countries

“Women have long service with distinction in foreign militaries. More and more countries are expanded the number of occupational specialties in which women can serve. The reason for the increase is numerous. Some include a growing recognition that women can do most military jobs as well as men and a continuing need for able body service member members.²³

“In some countries, women have engaged in combat as far back World War II. During World War II, Soviet women engaged in combat in every branch of the armed forces and they also piloted combat aircrafts. There was an all women bomber squadron and a woman fighter pilot was designated as an ace with 12 kills. Today, Canada, Germany, South Korea, France Spain, New Zealand and Denmark allow women to service in ground combat.”²⁴

How Would the Integration of Women Affect Readiness, Cohesion, and Morale?

In 1994, the Department of Defense rescinded the Risk Rule and made additional non-combat positions available to women. By 1997, the percentage of positions available to female applicants had risen from just 67.4 in April of 1993 to 80.2.²⁵ In 1997, the DOD asked the RAND Corporation to study the effect of these changes on readiness, cohesion, and morale.

The RAND study examined five attributes of personal readiness: “whether personnel are available, qualified, experienced, stable to the unit, and motivated,” and found that “the

integration of women had not had a major effect on readiness." Single mothers, the study found, did often consume the time of supervisory personnel due to "financial and child-care problems that impacted the unit." Numerically, though, single fathers were still more common in the military than single mothers and "single parents of either gender were perceived to place a burden on the unit."²⁶ While other problems such as the temporary loss of women in a unit due to pregnancy do occur, when compared with the effects of training, operational tempo, leadership, and materials, the RAND study clearly indicated that "gender is not perceived as affecting readiness."²⁷ In fact, out of 934 surveys, only 2 respondents indicated that gender had any affect at all on the readiness of the unit.²⁸ More than any other factor the quality and relevance of training, "was perceived as having the greatest effect."²⁹

With respect to cohesion, the RAND study found that any divisions caused by gender were minimal or invisible in units with high cohesion. Further, in units with low cohesion, gender issues were not seen as a significant negative factor. In one survey, 137 responses cited "different personal interests/values/personalities" as explanations for the cohesion of their unit while only 10 responses mentioned gender issues.³⁰ The 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces also studied the affects of women on the cohesion of a unit and reported similar findings.

- "Cohesion was reported high in units where people believed the command emphasized unity and the importance and necessity of all members in accomplishing the mission."³¹
- "Gender was reported as secondary issues in units were people felt their coworkers were professional and someone who they could trust."³²
- "When unit cohesion was an issue, it was not only attributed to gender, but also attributed to people forming cliques according to personal interests, values and race."³³
- "A unit is generally cohesive to the extent that its members like each other, prefer to spend time together, enjoy each other's, and feel emotionally close to one another."³⁴

A Soldiers attitude affects unit morale and cohesiveness; gender does not. Sexual harassment and fraternization problems go much further in dividing the sexes and preventing true unit cohesiveness.

Morale, which is closely related to cohesion, was also examined by the 1997 RAND study. Overall, written surveys collected by the RAND Corporation suggest that "gender is one of many issues that affect morale, but it is not one of the primary factors influencing morale." In one survey, 261 written responses mentioned "leadership/chain of command" when asked the

question "Why do you think your morale and your unit's morale is the way it is?"³⁵ In this same survey, only 8 responses mentioned gender issues when asked about unit morale.

While evidence collected by the RAND Corporation study does not suggest that gender has a significant negative impact on the overall morale of a unit, issues relating to sexual harassment and double standards for men and women were identified. According to the study, "the fear of unsubstantiated or false sexual harassment charges was prevalent among men surveyed." RAND also reported that many men felt that there was a double standard in their unit due to "different physical standards" and "a perceived unwillingness of male supervisors to demand as much of women as they do of men."³⁶ On the other hand, RAND found some evidence that women may actually be promoting a "more pleasant work environment" by reducing the "inclination of some of the men to become drunk and disorderly in the process of 'blowing off steam.'"³⁷

According to a 1998 General Accounting Office Report on Gender Issues, a 1994 press briefing suggested that "DOD officials believed that the assignment of women to direct ground combat units would not contribute to the readiness and effectiveness of those units." On the other hand, there is no evidence that the integration of women into a combat unit would have a significant negative impact on the unit's readiness, cohesion, or morale. According to a recent editorial published in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, "There have been no significant combat failures attributable to the presence or performance of women." Further, "Those units whose women made the news -- the Abu Ghraib Film Festival, the Camp Bucca Mud Wrestling Invitational, etc. -- had far greater command and discipline problems than women."³⁸

While the RAND study and recent experience clearly demonstrate that women do not negatively affect the readiness, cohesion, or morale of a unit, those seeking to exclude women from combat roles in the military seem to ignore this evidence. This pattern of thought is similar to the views held by government officials prior to World War II who excluded African-Americans from military service for similar reasons.

In 1925, the Army War College published a study claiming that social inequality made "close association of blacks and whites in military organizations inimicable to harmony and efficiency."³⁹ The authors of the study also concluded that black soldiers were inherently more cowardly than whites. Today, with African-Americans representing more than 30% of the United States military, it is preposterous to suggest that African-Americans have a negative effect on the readiness, cohesion, or morale of a unit. Should Colin Powell have been excluded from serving in our military because he is an African-American? Further, had he been limited to service in a non-combat role, would he have ever become a General or Chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff? Someday, historians may look back on the exclusion of women from combat roles and ask the same questions.

Is the Physical Make-Up of Women Compatible with Combat?

Opponents of integrating women into combat units have questioned their physical ability to serve in a combat arms branch, as well to engage effectively in ground combat. These opponents believe that women are incapable of running long distances, carrying heavy loads, or completing demanding physical tasks as well as their male counterparts. The Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces cited testimony about the physical differences between men and women:

In a 1988 study of Army recruits, women were found to be more vulnerable to exercise-induced injuries than men, with 2.13 times greater risk for lower extremity injuries, and 4.71 times greater risk for stress fractures. Men sustained 99 days of limited duty due to injury, while women incurred 481 days of limited duty.⁴⁰

The experience of other countries shows little evidence that women are suited for ground combat. For example, of 103 women recruited for infantry training after Canada repealed its combat rules in 1989, only one woman succeeded in meeting the physical requirements necessary to complete the training.⁴¹

Even if many women cannot perform certain tasks, those who can should not be excluded. Women should not be forced into an MOS for which they are unqualified or uninterested. Awarding of a skill should be based on individual ability and not on gender. While the physical makeup of a woman is different than that of a man, some women can out-perform their male counterparts, and this may account for any differences this make-up may cause. This point was illustrated clearly in RAND Corporation's 1997 study. "We were told that some jobs require considerable upper-body strength to move oil barrels, change large tires, or carry large sacks of flour. However, we also found supervisors who had resolved these problems."⁴² These supervisors apparently, had become "more cautious about injuries in general" and were realizing that "heavy work now requires multi-person efforts." Additionally, "savvy supervisors seemed to realize that some of their men could not lift heavy loads either and actively worked to manage the capabilities of the people they had."⁴³ The physical make-up of males and females is a simple law of nature. With this in mind, neither gender should be excluded from any job based on their gender.

During testimony before the 1992 Presidential Commission, "physiologists indicated that women, in general, are shorter, weigh less, have less muscle mass, and have a greater relative fat content than men." Further, "the dynamic upper torso muscular strength of women is

approximately 50 to 60 percent that of men, while their aerobic capacity is approximately 70 to 75 percent that of men.” In light of these statistics, the Commission reported “a strong consensus that standards should not differentiate on the basis of gender. “ The Commission then unanimously approved a recommendation that “the services should adopt gender-neutral muscular strength/endurance and cardiovascular capacity requirements.”⁴⁴ In other words, a Commission consisting of six generals, an admiral, and a colonel was presented with overwhelming evidence that women are generally speaking, physically inferior to men. However, if, as the Commission recommended, our military officials enact gender-neutral standards with respect to strength and endurance, no woman who is capable of meeting these standards should be denied the right to fight and die for her country.

A women’s group attending the 1997 Conservation Political Action Conference, called for the Bush administration to put an end to what they called the “politically correct social engineering project.” They claim that a gender-integrated military drives up costs, complicates missions, and endangers lives. However, they are ignoring the current realities in Iraq. In the final analysis, I think the presence of the female soldier can significantly increase the war-fighting capabilities of our great armed forces. “Since December 2002, more than 60,000 American women have deployed in support of the war in Iraq.”⁴⁵ Women have been awarded Bronze Star Medals and to date, one Army female soldier has been awarded the Silver Star Medal. Operations Desert Storm was a defining moment for women in combat, and it showed that modern war boundaries between combat and non-combat zones are being blurred. It makes no sense to cling to semantics (combat vs combat support) given the reality of war. Furthermore, allowing both men and women to compete for all military occupational specialties is not an equal rights issue, but one of military effectiveness. If the United States is to remain the world’s most capable and most powerful military power, we need to have the best person in each job, regardless of gender.

Ignoring Wishes of the Military

Women I have served with are some of the most conscientious, technically competent, talented, and intelligent soldiers in today’s Army. Women, just like men, are professionals, and as long as they are qualified to do their job, male soldiers are perfectly willing to work alongside capable women. According to the authors of the RAND study, “we were told repeatedly that, if relevant and realistic physical tests existed so that only qualified women (and men) were assigned to these positions, gender integration would not be an issue.”⁴⁶ In fact, in 1997 when

RAND conducted this study, over half of the military men surveyed actually favored "some relaxation of the ground combat exclusion policy."⁴⁷

Many officers also take this position. In May of 2005, when the Military Personnel Subcommittee passed a law prohibiting women from serving, not just as combatants but in any company-size unit supporting combat battalions and their subordinate companies, Lt. Gen. James L. Campbell, director of the Army staff, warned that the ban would close 21, 925 positions which had previously been available to women.⁴⁸ That same week, Retired General Gordon R. Sullivan, president of the Association of the United States Army, called the legislation "confusing" and "detrimental to units."⁴⁹ While the Secretary of the Army and the Vice Chief of Staff went on record opposing the ban the moment they learned it was under consideration. If both enlisted men and officers support the assignment of women to combat roles in our armed services, isn't it time that our officials in Washington take notice?

Women Have Met the Challenges of Combat

While female soldiers are currently excluded from assignment to combat arms units, women are often exposed to the same perils of combat while serving in support units away from the front lines. Based on experiences during Operation Desert Storm, the Defense Department recognized in 1994 that the Risk Rule was no longer relevant because "everyone in the theater of operation was at risk."⁵⁰ In that war, women were serving in Forward Support Battalions, they piloted attack helicopters, served in Combat Army Surgical Hospital's, transported supplies in convoys to combat zones, provided convoy security and patrolled main supply routes. Also, over "40, 000 women deploy to the Persian Gulf, where 13 women were killed and 2 were taken prisoner."⁵¹ Furthermore, "Army officers acknowledged that current combat missions -- and those likely in the future -- were defined by a new wartime environment in which combat zones have no distinct front line lands and there are no guaranteed secure rear areas."⁵²

Today, the lines between combat and non-combat missions are becoming even more blurred, and it is quite difficult to distinguish where one begins and the other ends. Increasingly, front lines and support units are often just as susceptible to attack as ground combat units. "Today combat may occur in the desert or on Main Street," wrote retired Air Force Brigadier General Stephen M. Koper, president of the National Guard Association of the United States.⁵³ In Iraq, both men and women are encountering and responding to hostile fire and are a target of opportunity by insurgents.

Currently, female troops make up nearly 15% of active-duty service members. Since 2003, 48 women have died and three hundred have been wounded in Iraq, and few female

troops are out of the line of fire.⁵⁴ Further, women are now receiving the same combat pay (hostile fire/imminent danger pay) as men. Given this reality, we border on fraud, waste, and abuse because we are paying women to do a job that regulations prohibit them from performing. Consider the geography and nature of the conflict in Iraq. Women are collocated with ground combat units. These women are providing convoy security; they are leading convoys in, to, and through ground combat as well as patrolling main supply routes. The Army is increasingly dependent on women and these women are serving very well in combat environments and situations. Perhaps, many will say this is an unwarranted step toward assigning women to combat units, but it is no more drastic than the original decision to admit women in large numbers. The evidence of women's service in Iraq indicates that they should be authorized to serve in all combat.

Today's Soldier

As the strongest and best equipped military in the world, American forces are rarely overmatched. In most cases, our soldiers are better trained, and our weapons are more advanced than those of our enemy. However, as we learned in Vietnam, the public relations war is often just as crucial to the success of a military operation as the actual fighting. In today's world, the struggle to maintain public support for democratization efforts in foreign countries is becoming increasingly more difficult. Even in countries such as Iraq or Afghanistan where American forces have toppled seemingly unpopular regimes, people are often skeptical of outside efforts to promote "freedom" or "democracy." In addition, news media outlets such as Al Jazeera are now providing millions of people with instant access to political news for the first time in history.

In this environment, peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts have become increasingly important. Consider the tasks that many of today's soldiers are asked to complete. On any given day in Iraq, an American soldier might be asked to search travelers at a roadside check point, comfort distraught mothers whose children have been killed or injured, search a woman's quarters in a strictly Islamic household, or assist civilians whose homes have been destroyed. Given the traditional role of women as peacekeepers and humanitarians in their own homes, is it not logical to believe that a woman could perform each of these tasks as well, if not better, than a man? In a 2001 Foreign Policy article, "Women Waging Peace," authors, Swanee Hunt and Christina Posa, note that women may possess an inherent advantage with respect to many of these common duties.

Equal Opportunity versus Military Necessity

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights, which governs civilian employment rights, does not apply to the military.⁵⁵ “Members of the armed forces surrender a number of their individual rights as citizens when they take the oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”⁵⁶ “The functional imperative of military service requires that service members surrender these rights in order for the military to perform its assigned function of protecting the rest of society--and giving society the freedom to enjoy many of the same privileges which members of the military have forfeited.”⁵⁷ Unit organization, mission accomplishment and the concept of the best person for the right skill outweighs individual liberties.⁵⁸ Women are making great strides toward equality within the military, but some female soldiers may be reluctant to seek congressional support for integrating women into combat units. They support the all-volunteer Army and believe that only fully-qualified women should voluntarily serve in combat. “Many Army women believe that lobbying for compulsory service for women is regressive and instead that serving in the military and in a combat role should be voluntary for both men and women.”⁵⁹

“Social climate and legal attempts to limit the opportunities for women to serve in combat situations have not stopped their participation in war. Defense of the freedom they value is important. They understand and accept the risk involved. The oath women take upon entering the service is exactly the same as their male counterparts; to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”⁶⁰ The double standards (MOS qualifications) totally contradict the Army’s own equal opportunity program and the basic military reliance on universal standards. Until the standards for men and women are the same, the misguided attitude that women hurt unit effectiveness will prevail.

Recommendation

The provision in the 1994 Department of Defense Assignment Rule for Women in the Services policy that excludes women from direct ground combat or from being collocated with direct ground combat units should be removed. A new policy should be formulated that allows soldiers regardless of gender, on voluntary bases, to service in all combat specialties. This policy would center on one’s ability and not on gender. There would be a gender appropriate or gender equivalency standard. The policy would also allow a soldier who met eligibility criteria to enlist, serve, and be commissioned in all specialties and branches. The presence of women in the Army is no longer an exception but, one could say, an ever more general rule. Women in the army are now a well-established phenomenon rooted in history. There is some short-term and

potentially long-term cost of changing the policy to intergrading women into combat. However, full integration of women into the Army can be accomplished over a period of time, in increments to lessen the stress on the force.

Conclusion

Throughout the last 60 years, women have gradually been integrated into the American Armed Forces, and their specialties and expertise, not their gender, have taken them closer to the battlefield. Today, women are serving effectively and honorably in Iraq and Afghanistan on the front lines, and they are serving exceptionally well. The factors that govern the enlistment and retention of personnel are numerous, complex and inter-related. However, women should be admitted into combat and combat branches based solely on their training and ability, not excluded because of their gender. A total integration of women into combat would not have a significant effect on readiness, cohesion, morale, leadership and training.⁶¹

Our egalitarian society teaches our young females that they can be anything they desire when they grow up, but that same society contradicts itself when it says that women are not physically or psychologically strong enough to serve in military combat positions. As women come closer to entering all Army MOSs, let us honestly assess their impact and performance. Since their inclusion, the public has been told "all is well" in this regard and the record of women in the service, supports this. But, let us be honest in our appraisal: We should have the courage to declare, "Enough is enough--allow women to serve in combat." If we do not address these concerns, then it is the soldiers, the Army, and, ultimately, our nation that will suffer. We should be more concerned with national security than with archaic attitudes toward women. Let them join the fight fully!

Endnotes

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